HOLDEN LIBRARY
PACIFIC SCHOOL
RELIGION

India Cultures

Quarterly

INDIA CULTURES QUARTERLY

VOL. 17 FIRST QUARTER 1959 NO. 1

CONTENTS

PAGE

NOTICE 1

1. WHEN I FOUND THEE, I FOUND ME
(selected from) Pattinathu Pillaiar 2

2. THE MID-INDIA REGION
Dr H. H. Presler, S.T.B., Ph.D. 4

3. TIRUKURAL (A New Translation)
Dr R. D. Immanuel, M.A., Th.D. 12

4. INTRODUCING STRANGERS TO HINDUISM
Dr H. H. Presler, S.T.B., Ph.D. 16

5. STUDIES IN THE BHAGAVAD GITA
Dr R. D. Immanuel, M.A., Th.D. 23

6. BOOK REVIEWS
Dr R. D. Immanuel, M.A., Th.D. 27

7. I WENT TO SEE ACHARYA VINOBA BHAVE
T. Varghese 29

THE INDIA CULTURES QUARTERLY

Editor: DR R. D. IMMANUEL
Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur, M.P., India

VOL. 17 FIRST QUARTER 1959 NO. 1

NOTICE

Foreign (outside India) readers are invited to become permanent subscribers to THE INDIA CULTURES QUARTERLY, which aims to record factual information of use to students interested in the cultures of India. Please note the low annual fee which has been adjusted to the cost price of printing and mailing, on a non-profit basis.

Our advisers in foreign exchange have written to us that the simple expedient of mailing your personal cheque for two dollars only will be satisfactory at this end. Enclose this cheque in a sheet of heavy letter paper on which you have mentioned your name and address, and place in an envelope addressed to the Department of Organized Research, Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur, M.P., India. Place an eight cent postage stamp on this envelope, unless you wish to post by air mail. If you act now on this simple matter, your subscription will reach us in time for the next issue. Make cheques payable to Department of Organized Research of L.T.C. By using its initials, the name may be conveniently included in the space usually available on a bank cheque.

Readers in India are advised that the subscription fee is Rs 2 for salaries of Rs 200 or less, and Rs 4 for salaries of Rs 201 or more. Note that henceforth Dr R. D. Immanuel will be in charge of editorial matters (as in the past), and Dr H. H. Presler will be responsible for the Mid-India feature and assisting with the business details.

WHEN I FOUND THEE, I FOUND ME

The following lines are by the Tamil mystic Pattinathu Pillaiar. The translation is the one made by Shri Surendranath Vogelle Arya; but unfortunately this book is out of print. These lines represent typically the mystic's idea that a man in order to know himself must know God first.

I

Who am I? What am I? Where am I?
Lord, these persistent and perpetual questions come to me.
They haunted me by day and they haunted me by night.
I read many books to find answers for them.
But the books merely confused me.
I went to many teachers to find answers.
But the teachers only confounded me.

II

Some learned man saith that my self was my body
and I was to be found there.
And so I searched for Me with diligence all
through the hairs of my body.
I searched for Me with diligence all through the
numberless pores of my body.
I searched for Me with diligence all through the
skin of my body.
I searched for Me with diligence all through the
blood of my body and in the blood-vessels.
I searched for Me with diligence all through the
bones of my body and in the marrow of my bones.
Lo, I have searched for Me in every little particle
of my body from the hairs of my head to the nails of my feet.
But, Lord, nowhere was I able to find Me.
Others said many other things.
I searched for Me with equal diligence in every other place.
O, I met with no greater success.

III

Lord, I resigned myself unto Thee.
Thou didst let Thy divine grace dawn on me.
The scales of illusion dropped from my eyes.
My eyes were lit up with Thy radiant light.
A new wisdom was born in me.

IV

Lord, I opened my eyes.
And saw Thee.
Lord, when I saw Thee, I saw Me.
Lord, when I saw Thee, I saw also Others—and
the rest of the World.
Wherever I saw Thee, whenever I saw Thee, I
saw Me also in a fuller and more comprehensive manner.
Wherever I saw Thee, whenever I saw Thee, I
saw Others, and the rest of the World, in
a fuller and more comprehensive manner.
But, Lord, those who have not found Thee have
not found Them.
But, Lord, those who have not seen Thee have
not seen Them.

THE MID-INDIA REGION

By Dr Henry H. Presler

Note: This regular feature in The India Cultures Quarterly is written by the director of the Department of Organized Research of Leonard Theological College. The present series, concluding with this issue, is entitled: 'Experiment in Oral Mythology'.

No part of this issue of the Mid-India Region may be reproduced without written permission from the author.

An experiment is a testing operation with given 'knowns' and one or more 'unknowns'. The knowns and the unknowns may be entities, or relationships or reciprocal influences; or, they may be concepts and definitions, or even classifications. An experiment may confirm an hypothesis or discredit it, or throw up a new hypothesis.

When I started writing this series on oral mythology more than a year ago, there were some hunches and classifications in my mind which required time and experimentation to sharpen. As my adventure draws to a close, I perceive the main hunch confirmed, but the classification must be revised. The central suspicion was that oral mythology in this mid-India region contains the same behavioural patterns, whether the myths pertain to humans only, or to humans and divine beings, or to divine being only. But my classification was obscure. It was as follows:

Actualizations

Descriptive of the contexts, types and procedures of this-world and local competition between humans only, revealing the societal pattern for inter-personal struggles.

Symbolizations

Descriptive of competition among humans into which supernatural beings are inserted as sharing the same values and expectations that characterize human wrangling.

Projections

Descriptive of competition confined to the acts of divinities, in which the cultural norms for humans are the same as for the gods, but embellished by the powers and characteristics attributed to the gods.

The unsatisfactoriness of the above titles for the classes may now be indicated. (1) The terms used are themselves in need of definition, whereas they are intended to define the classes. (2) The terms are 'newly coined', and obscure. (3) The terms, especially the second and third, hide within themselves theories derived from other data than those being presented. The term, 'projection', for example, has been

so cornered by one school of psychology as to imply its characteristic theory and in doing so, assumes an explanation for the myths about divine beings. I am not convinced that we can use psychology to 'explain' oral mythology. Oral myths have their own kind of causation, to be discovered from within, and not borrowed from without. (4) My previous terms are not sharp enough, nor are they exclusive. Whether a myth be a symbolization or a projection could be a subjective decision about which two or more students might debate.

What satisfactory titles may be given to the classes of oral myths? We cannot classify them in space as certain Orientalists do with the Vedic gods, dividing them between *swarg* or heaven, *pavan* or moving atmosphere, and *sansar* or earth. The unsatisfactoriness of such spatial terms is that the actors in the myths move between realms in space; and, it is not possible to define the actor or the locale by one spatial category. (For instance all the action of the myth may take place on earth, but some of the persons may be gods who appeared on earth for a limited time.)

We cannot, moreover, classify them in time because all the myths belong in the past, or in one category of time. The 'past' is such a general term, so wanting in definition among the masses in our mid-India region, as to be largely meaningless.

We cannot classify these oral myths according to configuration, pattern, or relationship without losing our frame of reference. The actors are in all conceivable mid-Indian relations with each other.

Well, there are other possibilities equally unsatisfactory. To conclude the matter, I have decided to classify as follows:

1. Oral myths pertaining to natual beings only.
2. Oral myths pertaining to natural and supernatural beings.
3. Oral myths pertaining to supernatural beings only.

The values in these classes are: (*a*) Two or more readers cannot avoid agreeing upon where to classify a myth. (*b*) The classes contain no so-called 'explanations' of how the gods came to behave as men. (*c*) These classes contain no philosophic prejudices as to the meaning or truth of the oral mythology itself, or as to the validity of the mythological process. (*d*) The classes provide a frame of reference within which the main hunch or thesis may be discussed.

Within this simplified classification, I observe the data confirming the thesis, to wit: *That the oral myths in all three classes have the same cultural patterns, which patterns are those of mid-India humans.*

Why this is so, is a question reserved for future consideration. The implications for world-view are very interesting, but outside our present assignment.

Before presenting these closing illustrations of the thesis, I may review previous instalments briefly.

We began by limiting our attention to oral myths of competition, strife, struggle, rivalry. (Perhaps any other type of myth could have been selected, with the same result.) Next we gave illustrations and

observations of the first class; then of the second; and lastly, began with the third. Under the third class of oral myths, we found many referring to one of the greatest struggles India has ever seen, i.e., between the *Adivasis* or original inhabitants of this peninsula (sometimes inaccurately called Dravidians), and the light-skinned Aryan invaders from the northwest. The struggle between humans lasted for centuries, and is as yet unresolved in some parts. Oral myths of the third class picture this struggle as between gods and demons, all supernatural beings. The powers of these beings are miraculous; yet their patterns of behaviour are as seen among natural beings (animals and men on earth). We were able to present myths (with supernatural actors only) pertaining to the Adivasi-Aryan struggle in the last issue of this magazine.

In this final instalment, we leave the afore-mentioned historic struggle, and turn to another, namely, the rivalry of supernatural participants for high status. In mid-India the past outcome of competition for ranking among humans, is recorded in the caste system. Whereas some cultures try to minimize differences in status (such as the mythology, Bill of Rights and public schools of Western democracy) the orthodox cultures of mid-India tend to emphasize the gaps between rankings, through the instrumentality of the caste system. In the mid-India region we have failed to discover evidence that the caste system has been noticeably weakened in recent years. If our thesis be correct (that the pattern of competition among humans is the same as the competitive pattern between supernatural beings), then we would suspect the goings-on of supernatural beings to be supercharged with status rivalries. I have found this to be precisely the case in local oral mythology. If the largest number of myths pertaining to supernatural beings, hold a mirror to the historic Adivasi-Aryan war, the second place in terms of quantity falls to those myths relative to supernatural rivalries over rank.

The oral myths in our collection do not describe competition for status as between the demons and the gods, notable, according to my thesis, because of the lack of such competition between the low and the high castes of humans. Caste fixes the status of each individual unalterably in this life; vertical mobility upwards is impossible in theory except through good karma and re-incarnation. Low and high castes do not compete for the same status, for such a struggle is inconceivable in orthodox mid-India ideology. Respective caste statuses are accepted, not achieved. We search the supernatural world in vain for any status competition between the minor and major spirits. Or, it might be better to say that if any such myths exist, the same have not been told to us. The generalization being expounded in this paper would not lead one to expect to find such.

What, then, are the status struggles in the supernatural realm? They are between divine beings sharing the same societal status (I mean, that status accorded a particular class by outsiders). The rivalry is as between individuals in the same *jati* (class, caste, genus),

seeking to achieve pre-eminence over their societal equals. This reflects the rivalry on earth, which is with one's own caste fellows for the most of whatever there is to get within that jati.

A moment's thought reminds us that if a power struggle between social classes occurs, it takes the form of warfare. But different societal classes do not struggle for status; only individuals who are members of the same status group, compete for intra-class or intra-caste ranking. Hence, the oral myths pertaining to supernatural power struggles, contain war myths between demons and gods, with the Adivasi-Aryan struggle as pattern. Status rivalries, however, are between individual demons and demons, or between individual gods and gods, with the contemporary caste system as pattern.

I now proceed to give examples of status rivalries as embodied in mid-India oral mythology. At the same time I want to summarize the entire argument with these illustrations, and to accomplish both purposes, will arrange the illustrations according to the three categories in the revised classification mentioned above.

Class I

Status Rivalry Between High Caste Humans

(One of the strongest temples in our city has profited from land use changes and population growth. Originally in the western jungle, on the banks of a bathing pool, it is now in the center of low economic class housing pressures. The approximately twenty acres of land given by a pious Indian for endowed peace and quiet, have been leased in small plots to poor people for the privilege of constructing mud houses thereon, and monthly rents are taken from them. Several thousand persons are jammed together on this land, and the temple has become wealthy. After destroying the original intent of the donor, the chief priest has begun to fill in the tank with rubbish in order to establish more land for rentals).

'Oh, Babuji! There is trouble in our temple. You see, Head Priest X— is an orthodox and able man. He was trained in the holy city of Benares. When people began to live here, there was too much work. So he accepted a *chela* (disciple) to help him. This chela was from our city. But after one year the master drove him away. Then he accepted a chela from N—, but somehow or other they couldn't pull on, and he forced the young priest to leave. Next he sent to Benares for one of his own kind. That new priest was a knower of Sanskrit, and able to recite the scriptures at length. Everybody respected him. But, what happened? Within seven months the old man and the chela got into it, and the friends of the head priest brought some lathis and gave the recent arrival a beating until he ran away to save himself. He never came back. So it goes. Now the head priest is alone again'.

Illustrations of status struggles between humans are commonly of the intra-group pattern. Notice that the low caste informant has no thought of competing with the priests; he views their internal quarrels as an outsider.

Class II

The second class of oral myths pertains to status rivalries involving both natural and supernatural beings. Our first illustration is of status rivalry between low ranks.

The Low Status Demoness vs. the Low Status Magic Mooth

Three years ago we were in N—working in a stone mine, breaking rocks into small pieces. In that rock pile one old Gond woman (a knower of magic power) was working. One day my elder brother picked up some quarrel with her and beat her with his sandal (the greatest social insult). This demeaned her in the eyes of all. She said nothing at the spot, but at the close of the work remarked, 'You beat me. I will see you when you have gone back to your own town'.

When we came back, it was the time of the X—festival (at the dark of the moon, the night of the year at which all magicians are plying their art or training their novitiates). That evening demoness M— came upon me through an ecstatic trance, and said: 'Guard your brother, for one *mooth* (a kind of earthen pot that floats through the air at a fairly rapid speed, bearing magic power recipes, and which damages or destroys the person against whom it is directed by the magician) will be coming to your town, sent by that old Gond woman, to take his life'. So the whole night we kept watch, and did not allow our brother to go outside the house. But the mooth came in the black of night, sailing through the air. We could see it coming. I ran to the shrine of demoness M— and asked her to protect my brother. She said, 'Burn grain on cowdung fire, and break one coconut in the name of that mooth which is coming'. I did the same, and the mooth stopped in mid-air, all glowing; and then it reversed its direction and went back without doing any harm. Next day there was no trouble.

A few months after this, it was the time of the holy festival. We had let loose the demoness M—from the neem tree, so that she might also observe the festival. (According to local ideology, it is possible for humans to confine a demoness to a particular tree by performing rituals. Or, a demoness can be kept out of a locale by rituals; the latter is called, *bandhna* in Hindi, and may be translated as 'binding'.) But unfortunately, during the free period when the demoness was absent, the mooth came. My brother was going towards the G—S—tank. The mooth came and struck him. My brother fell down on the ground and died instantly.

The foregoing myth presents two low status supernatural powers in league with natural or human clients: the magic mooth co-operating with the low status Gond tribal, and the demoness assisting the low caste victim. All four are considered boorish in the Rig and Sama vedas, where the high gods have no part with demonesses or magic. At present in mid-India, many high status persons disclaim any belief in these vulgar entities, thus adhering to the Rig dignity. This myth accords with the present ideological and social situation on earth, and the supernatural plebeians participate in the competitive status struggle between Gond and Kol tribes at the bottom of the social scale.

The following aristocratic illustration is a bit complicated. The actual status conflict occurs between high god Z—and high god P—, and the humans are but pawns in their rivalry. It being against our policy to mention the actual names of the divinities out of respect for our respondents, I will only add that the supernatural powers concerned are very popular throughout the mid-India region, and represent doctrinal differences.

Prestige is More Important than Armament

Before the commencement of the great battle of E—, which was fought between X-tribe and Y-tribe, god P— told the warrior of the Y— tribe that victory would go to the side possessing the 'palupat' weapon. That side could

never be defeated. God X— who lives in the northern mountain was the custodian of the invincible armament. All the men of the Y —tribe urged the warrior to go to the mountain and obtain the palupat weapon from the great god. So he started the journey northwards. After crossing many lands, valleys, rivers and hills, the warrior met a man of the Kirat tribe, well known in those ancient times. But secretly, god Z— had taken the form of this Kirat as a disguise. God Z— intended to preserve his dignity by demonstrating the inability of god P— (or his agent) to take the palupat weapon by right or force; only if god Z— condescended would god P— get the weapon. The Kirat (god Z— in disguise) exclaimed, 'Why have you come into our country?' The warrior said, 'To worship god Z—'. The Kirat said, 'If you come for worship, you have to leave all your weapons behind'. The warrior answered, 'I have not come to forsake my armament but to obtain more'. The Kirat retorted, 'Over my dead body you may pass'. So the two prepared for battle. The warrior was defeated for the first time in his life, but not killed or wounded. He felt much ashamed and sat down to meditate. At last he made an image of god Z— and prepared a garland of flowers. Then he hung the garland around the neck of the image. Behold! That image was the very Kirat, the victor. Realizing that god Z— himself had defeated him, the warrior felt better, and appropriately asked pardon. God Z— was highly pleased at maintaining his ascendancy and happily handed over his palupat weapon. The warrior took that back to the southland, and with it he and his tribe obtained the victory in that great battle. Also, god Z—was shown to be above god P—.

The next myth illustrates the inviolability of inherited ranking within the same group. We find, for instance, that certain mid-India castes are governed by a *sarpanch* or caste leader. This right to superordination over one's equals is inherited from father to son, no matter how able the individual. His caste fellows would not dream of disputing his right to make decisions for them. In the following myth, the question as to which god is greater is settled for the reason that atonement for ceremonial breach is due to one god only, and all other gods must subordinate themselves to make amends for their errors. In this tale both humans and divinities participate in the status rivalry between god T—and god U—. The defeat of god T—so wounds the vanity of his own messenger that the latter builds a temple to himself!

Proving that God U—is Greater than God T—

It so happened that god T— was coming back from a battle in which he had killed demon F—. A Brahmin met god T— and said acidly. 'You have committed something which is against our commandments. You have killed demon F— who was a Brahmin by caste. So you are under heavy sin and guilt'. God T— said, 'How is it possible for me to remove the sway of this sin which I have committed?' The Brahmin said, 'You will have to worship God U— and beg pardon'. So god T— sent his messenger to the northern mountain to get a symbol or image of god U—. The god messenger found god U— sitting there, and he asked him for a symbol. God U— said, 'Here are many images of me; take any one you like'. So the messenger started to pick up one that appealed to him as fitting, but could not lift it. He turned to another, but could not pick it up. A third would not budge from the ground. He continued trying, and in this way consumed a lot of time. Meanwhile, god T— was waiting and waiting. Becoming impatient, he took some clay and fashioned an image of god U—. At last the god messenger came back empty handed, and found god T—in the act of worship. The messenger became angry at this, and jealous. The messenger went off in high dudgeon and made a temple to himself. On the spot where god T— made atonement to god U— a temple is to be seen at this day, in addition to the one that the messenger made.

Not only does this myth illustrate the fixed and inherited individual status of each god among the gods, but it shows the uttermost of subordination in that one God makes an image of his fellow and falls down to worship it.

The King of the Gods vs. the Upstart God

When the king of the gods was first ruling, he was supreme everywhere. But when god L— was born, men began to turn to him. The king god was jealous and forbade them to do so. But they turned to god L— in any case, that is, some of them. So the king god caused a great flood to drown humanity. The rain came, and many sank and were no more. Still it was raining. But god L—, who was then only a boy, was standing knee deep in the water, sinking only so far, and he picked up a hill, balancing it on his finger. All his human worshippers climped on to that hill and the rest drowned. So the upshot was that only the worshippers of god L— were left alive to perform devotions, and the king god had to acknowledge that he was no longer supreme.

Notice that in the foregoing, a high status god competes with another high status god for top priority in the estimation of men.

Class III

This brings us to the third category: Status rivalries between supernatural beings.

Don't Demean your Son-in-Law

The god who was father of goddess X, did not like that his daughter should marry god Y, but she did it anyhow. So father god determined to demean son-in-law god. He made all arrangements to entertain the gods, but did not invite his son-in-law. Some say he did not invite goddess X. The son-in-law god told his wife not to go to the party, but she went in a fit of anger against her father who had insulted her husband by failing to send him an invitation. Towards the close of the day, the gods began to come. Respective seats, according to their position, were reserved. They took their proper places. In due time, all the seats were filled, except the seat for the son-in-law, god Y—. When the gods came to know that he had not been invited, they began to speak ill of him. Goddess X— could not tolerate their remarks, and tried her best to stop such, but she could not. She asked the help of her father, but he failed to intervene against the belittling. In loss of face, and in response to the insult to her husband, she stood in the midst of the gods and uttering a protest against this shame, simply departed from her body. When god Y—came to know of his wife's death, he came and took up the corpse over his shoulder and, without uttering a word, departed from the banquet hall. He came down on earth and began to dance in a terrible manner. Nobody could behold his dance. Every spot on which his feet came down was burnt. This went on for weeks; frightful destruction was taking place. The limbs of the corpse began to fall off, and wherever they lay, there a temple was built.

Even today, human feasts are intra-caste, and social ranking occurs at the banquet. The most serious blow to prestige is to be ostracized from the banquet of the *brauderie*. As on earth, so in heaven!

On, Who is the Wisest God?

Once the gods and goddesses quarrelled upon the question as to who would be the first and wisest among themselves. So a test was offered to them. All decided and agreed that the one who would make a round of the universe

first, would be the first among them. So all began the race on his usual mount. God A — rode on a rodent, god B— on a beast, God C— on bird, and so forth. All went forward as fast as possible and naturally god A— was left far behind. But god A — was very wise; in fact, he was the wisest. He dismounted and wrote on the ground the word, Pantheistic God (i.e., its equivalent). Then he made a round of that word, and stood still, satisfied till the others got back. On their return god A— declared himself to be the winner. All laughed at him until he exclaimed, 'Fools! When Pantheistic God is here and everywhere in the universe, why go around the earth? I made a round of Pantheistic God himself. So I am the first'. All had to accept him as the wisest among themselves, and that is why god A— is today worshipped first in all high god rituals.

Conclusion

Assuming our acquaintance with local oral mythology is comprehensive, that our methods of gathering the same have not skewed the intake, that we have contacted all major divisions of the local society, that our logic and arrangement are scholastically permissible, we reach the end of our experiment rather convinced that the behaviour patterns in local mythology are the same whether the actors be humans only, humans and supernatural agents, or only supernatural beings.[1]

The question arises, Why are they the same? . . . because men have modelled their gods after themselves? . . . or because men imitate their gods? Is the influence reciprocal?

[1] Persons interested in testing this hypothesis should have a thorough acquaintance with the cultures of their locale, and with its oral mythology, based on years of residence and facility in the vernacular.

(A New Translation)

CHAPTER XV

Not Coveting the Neighbour's Wife

Stanza 1

The foolishness of (illicit) conduct with another man's wife cannot be found among men who are either ethical or practical.

Note: The word translated 'practical' literally means able to obtain wealth. In other words this error, when considered purely from the business point of view, is foolish.

Stanza 2

Of all those who have fallen from virtue, there is none who is so far backward as those that stand at the house of the stranger (desiring the stranger's wife).

Stanza 3

Those who do evil (by committing adultery with the wife of the neighbour who trusts them implicitly) are not in any way different from corpses.

Stanza 4

However vast a man's wealth might be, even a small bit of it will not be left unto him if he goes to his neighbour's house (to commit adultery).

Stanza 5

Everlasting vengeance will rest upon him, who, thinking that it is easy, enters into the house of his neighbour.

Note: By the word 'everlasting' the poet, believing in the doctrine of Karma, affirms that the evil effect of adultery continues after death.

Stanza 6

Hatred, Weight of sin, Fear and Vengeance, these four will never leave the man who commits adultery.

Stanza 7

The righteous householder is he, who does not covet his neighbour's wife.

Note: In this and in the following stanzas, the emphasis is not on the act, but on the inward inclination of the heart.

Stanza 8

The nobly wise people do not look at other women with lustful eyes. This is not only their duty but also their natural behaviour.

Stanza 9

If one asks who is worthy to receive all blessings in this world surrounded by the wide and deep ocean, the answer is 'he who has not touched the shoulders of the neighbour's wife'.

Stanza 10

Even if a man does all unethical deeds, yet if he does not desire the neighbour's wife, it is good for him.

Note: The poet has a tendency to extol to great heights, the particular virtue he is dealing with in that Chapter. At that time it seems to him that, that particular virtue is the only virtue that should be cultivated. This stanza illustrates this tendency.

Chapter XVI

Forbearance

Stanza 1

Just as the earth bears those that dig her, even so the man who forbears those that despise him has excellence.

Stanza 2

It is always good to forbear—(evil deeds). But it is even better to forget them.

Stanza 3

The innermost poverty of poverty is sending away guests empty handed. But the strength of great strength is forbearing the faults of the foolish people.

Stanza 4

If anyone wants greatness of Character let him strive-continually after forbearance.

Stanza 5

(Wise people) will not remember those that have done evil to them. But they will cherish like gold those that forbear faults.

Stanza 6

Retaliation gives pleasure for one day, but forbearance brings lasting praise.

Stanza 7

It is good not to retaliate by evil deeds, an evil deed, better feel sorry the evil doer will meet punishment for his deeds.

Stanza 8

The great evil done by a man of mighty means, can only be met by a mighty forbearance of a great degree.

Stanza 9

He who forbears the angry words of an evil man is purer than an ascetic.

Stanza 10

He who fasts and does not eat is great. But the man who forbears unkind words is even greater.

Chapter XVII

Envylessness

Stanza 1

One should include envylessness as a part of his ethical code of conduct.

Note: Envylessness is an attitude and the poet by including this attitude, emphasises the inward nature of morality.

Stanza 2

The best possession a man could ever gain is a heart that does not envy anyone.

Stanza 3

If anyone does not want wealth (in this world) and heaven (in the next), let him envy the property of others.

Stanza 4

Those who discern the evil effects of envy will never resort to it.

Stanza 5

Envy inside a man is worse than enemies outside him.

Stanza 6

Even the relations of the man who envies generous giving will not have food to eat or clothes to wear.

Stanza 7

Lakshmi (the goddess of wealth) will forsake the man who envies and hand him over to her sister (poverty).

Note: According to mythology there are two sisters, the younger one Shree Devi, is he goddess of wealth and prosperity and the elder one Mudevi is the goddess of poverty, unhappiness and gloom.

Stanza 8

The sin of envy destroys all wealth (in this world) and leads a man to fire (in hell).

Stanza 9

The wealth of the man who envies and the poverty of the man who is good (that is not envious) should be carefully examined.

Note: The underlying idea seems to be that there can never be such cases, if one takes the law of Karma into consideration.

Stanza 10

No one has increased his wealth by envy; nor has any one's riches decreased by envylessness.

Chapter XVIII

Not Coveting

Stanza 1

The man who takes his neighbour's property, loses his community rights, and acquires sin.

Note: The word translated 'loses his community rights' might also be translated 'ruins his life'.

Stanza 2

They that know the evil consequences of reproachable acts will not resort to them. They hate unrighteousness.

Note: The following are reproachable acts. Murder, adultery, disloyalty to King, teacher, or parents, playing dice, drinking liquors, seizing neighbour's property, killing cows.

Stanza 3

Those that desire permanent bliss will hate transient pleasures, and will not do that which is not right.

Stanza 4

Those that have conquered the (five) senses will not covet things just because they do not possess them.

Stanza 5

What is the use of a man's vast learning if he covets his neighbour's possessions?

Stanza 6

Even he who desires justice and walks in it, will surround himself in great ruin if he harbours covetous thoughts.

Note: The word translated 'justice' probably should be rendered 'grace' (of God).

Stanza 7

Let no one desire the wealth acquired by seizing another's property. It's evil consequences are beyond description.

Stanza 8

The insurance against the decrease of wealth is not coveting another's property.

Stanza 9

The goddess of wealth will reside with him who, knowing what is right, does not covet.

Stanza 10

Coveting without knowing its consequences brings about death. On the other hand the majesty of not desiring yields great dividends.

INTRODUCING STRANGERS TO HINDUISM

By Dr Henry H. Presler

We are devoting only two lectures to the underlying Hindu world-view, known as, The Vedanta.

In the first hour, we donned the spectacles of a Vedantist and peered at the world through them. We seemed to be in a universe without a Creator, playing a game of make-believe, deluded by our ignorance into supposing it to have meaning. There apparently was no absolute standard of right or wrong, and no reality to evil. One religion seemed as worthy as another, for each looked true. At the same time, each religion looked false, because anthropomorphic. Whether the prophets, seers and incarnations reported in scripture ever walked the surface of the earth, we could not know, and the point was irrelevant. Personal immortality seemed both impossible and undesirable.

This Vedantic assessment of human existence frightened some of us strangers. We felt like running away with our cherished hopes and beliefs, lest they dissolve into nothingness. At the same time we were puzzled as to what life could hold for a Vedantist subscribing to so many denials. If there be no Creator, no real meaning to life, no fixed morality, no evil, no certain religion, no value to history, no personal immortality . . . what, we asked, is left?

TODAY the Vedantist answers that he is merely facing up to known facts. 'Over the inevitable thou shouldst not grieve'. It does not behove a person to lament the known. The trouble with you strangers says the Vedantist, is your focusing your attention on the known, without glancing at the Unknown. The known facts of our situation are better expressed in terms of flat denials. But such denials appear insignificant when set against the tremendous possibilities in the Unknown. You strangers, he says, quest for certainty, being blind to the overwhelming preponderance of uncertainties. In the equation of human existence, the bigger factor is the unknown 'X'. The human predicament may be compared to the equation; I plus X equals 999. You strangers focus attention on the known factor, I; we Vedantists focus on the unknown X, or 998. We think it safer to fall back on the Unknown than on the known. The Unmanifest, the Uncertain, the Unrevealed is the far larger portion of reality. Apart from the Unmanifest, life cannot be seen in proper perspective. The Unmanifest is the whole, the manifest only a fragment of the whole, only an unimportant fraction.

If, says the Vedantist, our preliminary assessment looks bleak and frightening to you, then you are over-emphasizing the known. What is left? you ask us. Indeed, all is left, all the possibilities of the Unknown are left; we are banking more on them. We consider this a positive position. The very concept of the Unknown is itself positive. A bridge player, for example, realizes that in the unknown dummy cards, lies positive help. The human creature is like a bridge

player holding only deuces, threes and fours in his hand, but recognizing that in the unknown cards is far more than his hand holds. In the great Unknown, says the Vedantist, we find God. In the Unknown we find a refuge for our souls. In the Unknown we enjoy the highest religious experience. In the Unknown we obtain serenity and freedom in this world.

While listening to such a speech from our Hindu intellectual, we strangers find our curiosity reviving. Let us investigate further what the Vedanta holds for its adherents.

At the outset, the Vedantist defines the Unknown as God. In the seventh Gita discourse, we read, 'Those devoid of reason think of Me, the Unmanifest, as having manifestation'. But, 'by me the unmanifest is essential'. We may not be able to define God, but no matter; there is sufficient hint of His existence, even in science.

There is no doubt an underlying substratum of energy in the universe which, according to a famous law of physics, can never be destroyed. This impersonal source of power exists, call it what you may. Sir James Jeans, speaking before the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1935, called it a 'continuous stream of life'. He said, 'When we view ourselves in space and time, we are obviously distinct individuals; but when we pass beyond space and time, we may, perhaps form ingredients of a continuous stream of life'.

Mr Whately Carington, in his book, *Three Essays on Consciousness*, says: 'Physiologists and biologists, chemists and physicists, are showing with increasing success that there is no kind of discontinuity to be observed between conscious and non-conscious matter'. There is a sort of force or power that holds the entire scheme together. Just what 'that' is, cannot be put into words. Physicists call it energy; biologists call it life-stream; a French philosopher calls it *elan vital;* psychologists call it 'drive'; cosmologists call it Demi-Urge; mathematicians call it some sort of underlying 'order'; but all seem convinced of the reality of that 'That'.

The Vedantist is the religionist who says triumphantly, That Unknown art Thou! O Brahman! Of course, the word 'thou' is to be taken as a term which is more convenient than accurate. This second person singular pronoun refers in our language to a person, whereas Brahm is not to be conceived so anthropomorphically as to be personal. Brahm is not personal. At the same time you cannot say he is impersonal, either. He is both personal and impersonal. He is both here and there, both devoid of qualities and yet enjoying qualities. In other words, Brahm is the basic One that encompasses all contradictions. To quote the Kena Upanishad: (Kena 4-5).

> Unmoving, the One is swifter than the mind.
> It moves, it moves not.
> It is far, and it is near.
> It is within all this, and It is outside of all this.

If the verse mystifies you, just consider that the world is full of contradictions. If it is consistency you want, then shut one eye to half the human situation and look only at the other half with the remaining eye. A total world view, says the Vedantist, must include both the positive and the negative.

So it becomes impossible to say just what the unknown Brahman is. I find it helpful[1] to borrow a term of science, and am therefore saying Brahman is the underlying Cosmic Energy. This energy makes the stars shine, the sun hot, the planets revolve, the stuff of matter to cohere, plants to grow, animals to breathe. This energy is indestructible, and may be in one form today, and in another tomorrow. It is the common dynamism in everything.

This common dynamism is Brahman, or God. Being immanent everywhere in all the universe, Brahman is conceived in terms of pantheism, or as some prefer, of panentheism. Any being who is everywhere, can be only one being, and so God is conceived as a monism. The heterogeneity of the universe is reduced to just, one, all-inclusive Being.

In the Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad, this monism is charamingly put in a conversation between a student and the famous Yajnavalkya. The former questioned the latter, 'How many gods are there, Yajnavalkya?' He answered, 'Three thousand three hundred and six'.

'Yes', said he, 'but just how many gods are there, Yajnavalkya?'
'Thirty Three.'

'Yes', said he, 'but just how many gods are there?'
'Six.'

'Yes', said he, 'but just how many gods are there?'
'Three.'

'Yes', said he, 'but just how many gods are there?'
'Two.'

'Yes', said he, 'but just how many gods are there?'
'One and a half.'

'Yes', said he, 'but just how many gods are there, Yajnavalkya?'
'One.'

'Which is that one God?'
'Brahman.' (Brihad A. Upanishad, chap. 9)

Brahman is one God, not separate and apart from the universe, but immanently within and of it. It[2] encompases everything, beyond the mind of man even to grasp; It is the great Unknown.

[1] Note the word, 'helpful'. I do not say Brahma IS Cosmic Energy. Neither can one say Brahman is not Cosmic Energy. Technically, one cannot say what Brahman is.

[2] The Vedantists use the pronoun, It, to refer to God.

II

This brings us to the human soul. The energy in you, variously called spirit or soul in other contexts, is the very same cosmic energy or Brahman. When you die your energy passes into some other transient form.

All your individuality is, of course, ended, terminated, finished; but your disassociated spiritual energy goes on into some other body if you have been ignorant and under the spell of material enticements.

But if you know that the cosmos had no creator but was emanated by Brahman, as a spider emits a web; if you know that morality is relative and without reference to salvation; if you know that evil, pain and suffering are all unreal; if you know that all religions are equally true and false, mere anterooms to the chamber of Vedantic truth; if you know that the gods are reduced by human thought to the dimensions of mankind; if you know that historical questions are irrelevant; if you know that personal immortality is impossible; and if you know there is Brahman (call him what you will; energy, life-stream, elan vital, drive, Demiurge, order, or merely 'That with a capital 'T'), if you know all this, then your inner Self will not be reborn in the prison of matter again, but will rejoin the all encompassing Brahma, as a raindrop rejoins the ocean.

The Vedanta promises salvation through knowledge. It is knowledge of the falseness of all previous knowledge. It is knowledge that reality is unknown and unknowable. The most frequently recurring refrain in Vedantic scriptures, is: 'If you know this . . .'If you know this, the fetters binding your little self to individuality will be broken, and like a homing pigeon, you fly back to the bosom of the Great Self. Of course, 'you' will not then realize that your unit of energy has been reabsorbed in Cosmic Energy. You will not sense this any more than an ampere of electricity realizes it has rejoined the earth through a ground wire.

If, at this point, you remove the Vedantic spectacles to rest your eyes (and mind), you may not see things properly. You will be saying, 'To reduce me to a state of being-as-if-I-had-never been, is not attractive. It looks like annihilation of my ego, of myself, of my personality. It seems like reducing me to the force in the molecules of my corpse, and saying, That is all there is to you, recombining in various compounds.'

It becomes necessary, therefore, to don the Vedantist's spectacles again to see the matter from his angle of vision. Now we perceive that what may be called the worst, is actually the best. Salvation consists in escaping from individuality with its limitations. Individuality means playing a part in this vain show and thinking a mere drama real. Individuality means isolation with the known, apart from the vastness of the Unknown, apart from union with the All. Individuality means being content with one's littleness, and rejecting God's all-inclusiveness. The individual is a spark, glowing for a moment, and going out; Brahman is the eternal fire.

Brahman is *sat*, pure existence ... *chit*, pure consciousness ... and *ananda*, pure bliss. By surrendering individuality, your unit of energy rejoins absolute existence, absolute consciousness and absolute bliss. We don't know what this may mean in all its fulness, says the Vedantist; but it will be better than what we know of our miserable individualities. The Unmanifest is safer than the manifest.

III

What we can't fully know now, we may partially know, even in this life, which brings me to the third promise of the Vedanta. The Vedanta is not mere speculation, according to its adherents. You can now enjoy a foretaste of Brahman's absolute existence, consciousness and bliss. You can have experiences that are simply out of this world, by becoming momentarily merged with Brahman through spiritual exercises. Oneness with Brahman is not an attainment, but a realization. It is an awakening of your unit of energy to contact with Cosmic Energy (usually called Divine Life). The Upanishad says: 'He who truly knows the Supreme Brahman, becomes Brahman'.

He who accepts the theory of the Vedanta, and practises its discipline, rises by slow degrees to an unclouded experience of the Absolute and of the identity of his own soul with the World Soul. In this identity he has a foretaste of *sat*, pure existence. *Sat* means that he enjoys a knowledge of the relative character of the world, his own body, and human concepts. He has no more pain nor sorrow, no fear and no desire. He is far above the pleasures of this world. Sin cannot approach him and he need not make any effort to be virtuous. The Brihad says:

> He who knows this, these two do not overcome—neither the thought: 'Hence I did wrong', nor the thought, 'Hence I did right'. Verily, he overcomes them both. What he has done and what he has not done, do not affect him. Having this knowledge, having become calm, subdued, quiet, patiently enduring, and collected, one sees the Soul just in the soul. One sees everything as the Soul.
>
> (*4th Brahmana*)

Moreover, in the process of rising to such heights, he has a foretaste of *chit*, pure intelligence. He attains marvellous supernormal powers (siddhis), such as clairvoyance, clairaudience, thought-reading, thought transmission, and of knowing the past and the future. He can see and hear at great distances. Indeed, he may become thoroughly recollected and absorbed in pure Thought, without any reasoning, without any consciousness of himself as a subject doing the thinking, without any consciousness of the object (Brahman) thought about. In this state the mind loses itself in Brahman, and has no awareness of itself. This means that the little self has a brief experience of being restored to pure intelligence: *chit*.

Again, the Vedantist may realize a fore-experience of *ananda*, pure bliss. The Brihad says that this bliss is not to be compared with any human happiness.

> If one is fortunate among men and wealthy, lord over others and best provided with all human enjoyments, that is the highest bliss of man. Now a hundredfold the bliss of men is one bliss of those who have won the father's world. A hundredfold bliss of those who have won the father's world is one bliss of the Gandarva world. A hundredfold the bliss of the Gandarva world, is one bliss of the gods who gain their divinity by meritorious works. A hundredfold the bliss of the gods, is one bliss in the Prajapati world, and of him who is learned in the Vedas. . . . And a hundredfold bliss of the Prajapati world, is one bliss in the Brahman world. This truly is the highest world.
>
> (*3rd Brahmana*)

All this is promised to those who turn from the known, to the Unknown.

IV

Finally, for the remainder of his life on earth, the Vedantist realizes freedom and serenity and honour in this world. His freedom consists in this, that society can make no more demands upon him (although Vedantists sometimes engage a social service voluntarily). He need not seek to adjust himself to his fellows, by trying to change himself in any iota. All self-criticism is gone. He rather turns inward upon himself as he is, for his former little self has now an affinity with the Great Self, and needs not to be altered in anyway. In perfect freedom, he may be satisfied with himself. He is freed of all the botheration of religion. Scriptures cannot teach him anything more, and are superfluous. The scripture itself says of such a man, 'To him the Veda is no Veda'. He may turn his back on sacrifices. He is beyond good and evil, in glorious freedom.

He has serenity because he himself is a part of God, nay, he himself is God. The Vedantist does not worship the gods, because he is God. His breathing is a manifestation of his deity, each intake and each expulsion being an inaudible expression of the Sanskrit words: *Aham, Sah, Aham:* I, I, I.

Finally, he experiences the honour of men. They grant the superiority of his intellect, because only the highest intelligence can grasp the correctness of Vedanta. Those who don't agree to the system, are simply of lesser mental ability. The Katha Upanishad states this plainly:

> Not when proclaimed by an inferior man, is He to be well understood, (though) manifoldly considered. Unless declared by another (superior man), there is no going thither.
>
> For He is inconceivably more subtle than what is of subtle measure.

The Mundaka Upanishad 3. 2. 4. states emphatically that Brahman can be realized only by the superior person.

Conclusion

So I return to the first sentence of the previous lecture: A Vedantist is a person who has 'realized' the meaning of the basic Hindu world-view in his own experience.

If you ask me whether it be possible for a person to experience a 'realization' of the Vedantic ideology, I will unhesitatingly reply that I believe it possible. A stranger who steeps his mind in the study of the Vedanta for years, one who shares the lives of Vedantists through observation and discussion, one who gazes into their wrapt faces during *samadhi* (trance experience of union), comes to know vicariously that such 'realization' is a possible psychological experience.

Finally, if you ask me whether there is any validity behind the psychological experience, I shall not answer you. I shall call upon the philosophers of India (for centuries divided into six schools) to reply. Let us ask them this carefully phrased question: Is the Vedantic position, as stated by its leading exponent, the great Shankara, one hundred per cent valid? The vote is one in the affirmative, against five in the negative. If the Hindus themselves cannot agree upon the Vedanta, we strangers shall content ourselves with defining it.

I—The Doctrine of Sin

We begin with this number a series of studies in the Bhagavad Gita. There will be no attempt to evaluate or criticise the doctrines, though sometimes comparisons will be made in order to bring to light clearly the differences between the Gita view point and those of other sacred books. Our main aim in these studies is facts. That is, what does the Gita say about it? As far as possible we shall use the very words. The translation used here (unless otherwise stated) is the popular one rendered by Sri Jayadayal Goyandka and supplied by the Gita Press, Gorakhpur. We begin our studies with the doctrine of Sin.

I. Word Study

The number of Sanskrit words used in the Gita to describe (or in association with) sin helps us to understand the nature of the phenomenon we are dealing with. One of the words used is 'dosha'. Sometimes it is translated as sin, but more often some other word is used. The following are some important passages:

(*a*) '*Dosh*' translated as crime.

In 1:38 and 39, Arjun says to Krishna 'Although these people, with minds blinded by greed, do not perceive the evil of destruction of one's race and the sin accruing from enmity towards friends, why should not we . . . think of turning away from *crime*'.

(*b*) '*Dosha*' as evil.

In 1:43 Arjun says: 'Through these *evils* bringing about an intermixture of castes, the age-long caste traditions and family customs of the destroyers of the race get extinct'.

(*c*) '*Dosha*' as vice.

In 2:7 Arjun says: 'With my very being tainted by *the vice* of faint heartedness and my mind puzzled with regard to duty, I am asking you'. Hill translates the word 'dosha' as 'fault' here.

(*d*) '*Dosha*' as 'faultiness'.

Hill translates 13:8 thus:

'Desirelessness towards things of sense, abandonment of the thought of I, perception of the *faultiness* of birth, death, age, sickness and pain.'

(*e*) '*Dosha*' as imperfection.

In 18:48, Sri Krishna tells Arjun (Hill's translation) 'One's innate duty, son of Kunti, one should not abandon, imperfect though it be; for in every enterprise *imperfection* is involved as fire in smoke'.

Another word associated with and describing sins is 'pataka'. Pataka is that which causes to fall. In 1:38 Arjun says that 'People blinded by greed do not perceive the *evil* of destruction of one's own race'. The word Pataka is used in the original for 'evil' here.

A third word that we come across is 'Vrijina'. This word literally means 'the crooked thing'. In 4:36 Sri Krishna says 'Even if you are the most sinful of all sinners, you will cross over all *sin* by the raft of Knowledge'. Here the word translated as sin in the original is 'Vrijina'.

A fourth word associated with sin is 'Kilbisa'. This word literally means an offence or injury. In 18:47 we have the following 'Better is one's own duty, though devoid of merit, than the duty of another well-executed. He, who performs the duty enjoined by his own nature, does not incur **sin**'. The word translated in this verse as sin here, is in the original 'Kilbisa'. Hill translates it as 'stain'.

'Kalmasa' is another word that is used in association with sin. In Indian languages it is used to denote a stain. 'Those . . . who are exclusively devoted to Him, their sins being wiped out by wisdom, go to whence there is no return'. 5:17. Here we see 'Kalmasa' is something that could be wiped out, or as Dr Radha Krishnan translates, 'Washed away'.

Another word that is used quite often has a much bigger notation than any of the five preceding words. It is 'Adharma', in 4:7 we have the famous statement. 'Arjuna, whenever there is decline of righteousness, and unrighteousness is in the ascendant, then I body Myself forth'. Here 'adharma' is translated as Unrighteousness. Hill translates it as 'Wrong'.

These six words Viz: dosha, pataka, vrijina, kilbisa, kalmasa and adharma, which are used interchangeably to denote sin, help us to understand the concept better. In short sin is a defect, a fault, an imperfection, a stain, something crooked, a wrong, an offence, an injury that which causes man to fall.

II. Psychology of Sin

The Gita gives a good description of the psychological approach to sin. Of course, the psychological terms and concepts used are those that were current in those days. So to the twentieth-century man they may be unfamiliar. All the same it is interesting. The author is a realist, from the empirical standpoint of view. So he says, the world that is outside strikes on the sense organs and it is within the power of man not to attend to it. Thus in 2:58, Sri Krishna says, 'When like a tortoise, which draws in its limbs from all directions, he withdraws his senses from the sense-objects, his mind has become stable'. On the other hand, if he dwells on the senses, attachment takes place and he is deluded. 'Those, who are completely deluded by the Gunas (modes) of Prakriti, remain attached to those Gunas and actions'. 3:29. This attachment produces love or hate and so it desires that which is absent: This is called 'Kama'. When it wants very much that which is present it is 'raga' and when it hates intently it is 'crodha'. When it is greedy after it, it is 'lobha'. It is here one can see the emphasis that Gita puts on love and hate. The following verses help

us. 3:37 'It is desire, it is wrath, begotten of the element of Rajas, insatiable and grossly wicked; know this to be the enemy in this case.'

2:63 'From anger arises infatuation; from infatuation, confusion of memory; from confusion of memory, loss of reason; and from loss of reason one goes to complete ruin.'

16:21 'Passion, anger and greed, these constitute the triple gate to hell leading to the damnation of the soul. Therefore, one should shake off all these three.'

III. Specific Instances

Intermixture of castes is described as a great sin.

1:43 'Through these evils bringing about an intermixture of castes, the age-long caste traditions and family customs of the race get extinct.

Not doing the duty of the caste, is also considered as sin. The duty of the warrior-caste is to fight, if he refuses, it is a sin.

2:38 'Now, if you will not wage such a righteous war, then, abandoning your duty and losing your reputation, you will incur sin'.

Treachery to friends is considered as a sin. Dr Radha Krishnan's translation of 1:38 is as follows: 'So it is not right that we slay our Kinsmen, the sons of Dhrtarastra. Indeed, how can we be happy, O Madhava (Krishna), if we kill our own people?'

People should take food only from what is left after sacrifice, those who take any other food are committing sin.

3:15 'The Virtuous, who partake of what is left after sacrifice, are absolved of all sins. Those sinful ones, who cook for the sake of nourishing their body alone, eat only sin'.

The man who does not do what his creator intends him to do, is committing sin. Following the sense objects, makes life Vain and Sinful.

3:16 'Arjuna, he who does not follow the wheel of creation thus set going in this World (i.e. does not perform his duties), is sinful and sensual, he lives in Vain'.

However, the soul does not act, does not kill.

2:19, 20 'They are both ignorant, he who knows this the soul to be capable of killing and he who takes it as killed; for verily the soul neither kills, nor is killed'. 'The soul is never born nor dies; nor does it exist or come into being. For it is unborn, eternal, everlasting and primeval; even though the body is slain, the soul is not.'

IV. Cause of Sin

Ignorance or lack of Understanding regarding the real nature of Self seems to be a very important factor in Sin.

18:16, 17 'Not withstanding that, he who, owing to impure reason, views the absolute Self as the doer is of perverse understanding, and does not see at all.' 'He whose mind is free from the notion of doership and whose reason is not affected by worldly objects and worldly activities he does not kill, nor is he bound (by sin).'

Dr Radha Krishnan translates 7:15 like this, 'The evil doers who are foolish, low in the human scale, whose minds are carried away by illusion and who partake of the nature of demons do not seek refuge in Me'.

Of course we have seen that desire is one of the reasons for sin. However, in order to be factual, it should be pointed out, such a general statement is apt to be misleading. Radha Krishnan says, in his commentary (page 216) 'Desire as such is not evil. Selfish desire requries to be rooted out. The desire for union with the Divine is not wrong'.

V. Conquest of Sin

Knowledge enables one to conquer sin. This knowledge is difficult to obtain, but it is of a kind that looks with equanimity on pleasure and pain. It is a knowledge that understands the real relation between the individual soul and the Supreme Soul. Thus:

5:17, 18 'Those whose mind and intellect are wholly merged in Him, who are constantly established in identity with Him, and are exclusively devoted to Him, their sins being wiped out by Wisdom, go to whence there is no return.' 'The wise look with the same eye on a Brahman endowed with learning and culture, a cow, an elephant, a dog and a pariah.'

Another way of removing sin is by works. The following verses explain it clearly:

5:10. 'He, who acts, offering all actions to God, and shaking off attachment, remains untouched by sin, as the lotus leaf by water.'

4:21. (Hill's translation) 'Expecting naught, his thought held in restraint, abandoning all possessions, doing that work alone the body needs, he gets no guilt.'

A third way of removal of sin is by devotion or 'Bhakti' as it is called:

9:31. 'Speedily he becomes virtuous and secures lasting peace. Know it for certain, Arjuna, that My devotee never falls.'

18: 65, 66. 'Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me, and bow to Me; so shall you without doubt reach Me. This I truly promise to you; for you are dear to me.' 'Surrendering all duties to Me, seek refuge in Me, alone. I shall absolve you of all sins; grieve not.'

SWAMI GYANANDA SARASWATI: THE YOGA OF WISDOM (*For the Sputnik Age*) (Hoshangabad, Gyana Niketan, 1959).

Here is an interesting booklet, showing the trend of Hindu thought in neo-Hinduism. The author heads an ashram called 'Gyana Niketan' Hoshangabad on the banks of the river Narmada. It is claimed that this ashram is an international spiritual centre, with a nature cure clinic. It is stated that daily classes on 'Bhakti', 'Yoga' and 'Vedanta' are held and that every day worship or 'pooja' is conducted and 'prasad' or blessings are distributed at this place.

The underlying assumption of the booklet is that 'all religions are true' and that there is no need to 'fight' among religions. The author feels that there is a great necessity of 'inter-religious fellowship'. So, he has written a universal prayer for use by all people. The first paragraph is as follows:

OM

Oh supreme Being,
Saivas worship Thee as Siva,
Vaishnavas worship Thee as Vishnu,
Buddhists worship Thee as Buddha,
Jains worship Thee as Arhat,
Muslims worship Thee as Allah,
Christians worship Thee as Father,
And Vedantins worship Thee as Brahman,
May Thou enlighten us,
By Thy Mercy and grace of Wisdom,

OM

Sarvesham Swastin Bhavatu
Sarvesham Santin Bhavatu
Sarvesham Poornam Bhavatu
Sarvesham Mangalam Bhavatu.

This is followed by an eulogy of the river Narmada. The following few lines taken at random are typical of the rest:

A dip in Thee refreshes and purifies the heart
Thou deliverest them from the round of births and deaths.
Who can describe, Mother, Thy glory and splendour

Again,

'I adore Narmada. I wave light to Mother Narmada. I pray to Mother Narmada. I do salutations to Narmada. I sing to the glory of Narmada' etc.

The book has six chapters dealing successively with the following topics: need for religion, necessity of a Guru, This World, Man, Wisdom of God and God Realization. The book is full of quotations from the Bible, the Upanishads, the Gita (though without quotation marks). The author seems to have studied these books in such a way, that his language itself reflects his acquaintance with these books.

Sometimes he is humorous. For instance he says 'Man is a noun of masculine gender in the objective case governed by the active verb, woman'.

Sometimes he is critical, as when he writes, 'men are mentally deranged idiots, morally deranged rascals, spiritually deranged ignorant fools'.

The spirit of Syncretism breathes through the whole book. His emphasis on tolerance leads him to hold the position that every religion is true.

I WENT TO SEE ACHARYA VINOBA BHAVE

By T. Varghese

It was a fine cloudless afternoon. The sun was shining brightly and we were standing expectantly at the gate of our ashram at Tadagom. Everyone all around knew that Acharya Bhave was coming that way walking. He arrived at about 3 O'clock and he entered our ashram to say, 'How do you do?', to Bishop Pakenham Walsh, the head of our ashram. He stayed there just a few minutes and did not even enter into any of the buildings of the Ashram, but went right away to Coimbatore. So I followed him. More than two hundred people were following but no one went along with him; all were behind him. He did not walk fast, he did not sing, he did not speak, but was eager to reach the next village.

The Acharya is a tall, lean man. His clothing was scant, with a rectangular piece of cloth about four feet long thrown carelessly over the head and shoulders. Another piece of cloth was around his waist, barely reaching to his knees. A pair of canvas shoes made up his complete dress outfit.

The road was dusty, the way was long, and weary, but he didn't utter a single word, but kept on marching, looking straight ahead. The next village was about five miles off and we were received joyously by the people who were there. When Vinobaji was about half a mile away from the village, a large group of men along with school boys and girls came to meet him. The leader had in his hand a large brass plate, containing a coconut, the lighted oil lamp, some flowers, some betel leaves and nuts. He stood there and waved the plate in front of him and garlanded him, with a garland made of home-spun cloth (Khadi).

There was no incident on the way except the bidding farewell to one of his followers. This gentleman had been following him, but now wanted to catch the next train; so he went before the Acharya and knelt before him and asked his blessing by touching his feet reverently. The Acharya put his hands upon his head and gracefully blessed him.

The Acharya did not eat any solid food that day, but his disciples gave him curds, honey, and fruit juices all mixed together. He did not need a table to eat his meals, he did not wash his hands nor did he sit. He just stepped aside from his way to the shade of a tree and quickly finished his business. While the Acharya was very simple his disciples forced him to be otherwise, by serving his frugal meals in a silver bowl, and he had to use a silver spoon.

At the village he was given just a short interval to wash his face, hands and feet, and to get ready for the meeting, at which he was expected to give an address. The meeting opened with a silent prayer. The silence hasted for five minutes. It must have seemed an interminable, long period, especially for the small children. But there was

absolute silence, though there were more than two to three hundred people. He spoke in Hindi and it was translated into the vernacular.

We, about fifteen of us, had the privilege of interviewing him. After the preliminary introductions and greetings, we asked the Acharya several questions. Here are a few, along with his answers:

Question 1—What is the seat of authority in religions? Are they not inspired? Do not the various religions claim the inspiration through their sacred scriptures?

Answer—The scriptures point to the truth, so they have authority. But their authority is not final. Just as a pointer to a road becomes useless when the destination is reached, so a time will come when the scriptures, too, will become useless for a man when he has attained the truth. At that time his scriptures should be thrown to the rivers because they would have outlived their usefulness. The seat of religion is not the scriptures. The Kingdom of God is within you.

Question 2—Present day people in India are faced with a serious food shortage. If they could keep poultry and eat eggs, that would be of great help to the building up of the nation and relieve the food situation. The same thing could be said about fish, also.

Answer—It is wrong to take life under any circumstance. One should not kill another life just to preserve his own life. There are two kinds of eggs: the eggs that are fertilised and the eggs that are unfertilised. In principle there is no objection to take unfertilised eggs as food; however, I would not advocate it. It is good for a man to live on vegetarian food alone.

Question 3—The system of giving dowry in this part of India has very deep roots; however, it has got several disadvantages socially. Under this circumstance, can we advocate dowry systems?

Answer—There is nothing wrong for a man to give to his daughter some money at the time of her marriage. The daughter is as much a child as his son. However, when it becomes a question of compulsion to extort from parents who are unable to give, it becomes a social evil. The way to prevent this is for the young man to refuse to marry with dowry under such circumstances. Young men can force their parents in many ways. And I would think that, even resorting to Sathiagraha will not be too much to effect this.

Question 4—Can a village be self-sufficient in this 20th Century? We have to depend upon products that are bought from outside for our very existence. For instance: nowadays, we cannot get along without kerosene oil or matches, nor can any village in India, probably no village anywhere, produce these two without depending upon outside help. What is your answer for this difficulty?

Answer—Self-sufficiency of the village is a basic axiom. It is something which cannot be proved. The self-sufficiency of the village when it is fully developed according to the plans of Sarvodaya, is the Kingdom of God. It is stated that the Kingdom of God is within us. The Kingdom of God does not require foreign aid or foreign substance. Its dynamic power is from within.

With reference to kerosene oil and all other natural products, they are for the whole world. Nobody can claim that the sun is his, or the moon, or the water, or even the earth. These are god's blessings to man. They should not be used by a few people with the right of monopoly.

All these answers are as accurate as I am able to reproduce. First, he spoke to us in Hindi and it was translated to us by an interpreter. But the Acharya saw that he was not translating it correctly. So he spoke to us in English and used occasionally our vernacular words.

When we asked for his autograph, we were not allowed by his disciples. They told us, if he started writing autographs, that would be the only thing he could be doing. However, we were told that if we bought a copy of the Bhagavad Gita with his interpretation and exposition, then we could get a book with his autograph. So we bought a copy. To our amazement, we found that he autographed his name in Hindi as well as in Malayalam.

Statement of ownership and other particulars about the quarterly periodical 'India Cultures Quarterly' as required to be published under Rule 8 of the Registration of Newspapers (Central) Rules Act.

FORM IV

1.	Place of Publication	...	Jabalpur
2.	Periodicity of its Publication	...	Quarterly
3.	Printer's Name	...	K. A. Korula
	Nationality	...	Indian
	Address	...	Wesley Press, Mysore
4.	Publisher's Name	...	Dr R. D. Immanuel
	Nationality	...	Indian
	Address	...	Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur.
5.	Editor's Name		
	Nationality	...	Do.
	Address		

I, R. D. Immanuel, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

R. D. IMMANUEL
Signature of publisher

PRINTED IN INDIA BY K. A. KORULA AT THE WESLEY PRESS, MYSORE CITY

Foreign subscribers may send personal cheque of two dollars only for one year's subscription to the **INDIA CULTURES QUARTERLY** to Dept. of Organized Research, Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur, M.P. India, making same payable to the said department.

MONOGRAPHS FOR SALE

S. JAYAKAR, Rural Sweepers in the City

A socio-religious analysis of a community of rural migrants living in urban surroundings.

C. J. JOB, Folkways Affecting Disease

A cultural analysis of the magic, native medicine, ideology, emotional factors inhibiting the practice of scientific medicine in a Telugu community.

S. KARIAPPA, The Death of a Garrison Church

A natural history study of a declining institution, with an analysis of factors leading to demise.

J. THANGIAH, Acculturation of Jabalpur Tamils

A description of the modifications in culture patterns experienced by a community of South India after thirty-five years in mid-India.

H. H. PRESLER, Progress of All Classes

A description of the procedures whereby two villages have won first place achievements in the United Provinces Rural Development Scheme, together with the anthropological theory behind the operations.

H. H. PRESLER, Introducing Foreigners to Hinduism

A combination of the historical and social science approaches in an exposition prepared for the Western mind.

Price Rs. 2 each. **One dollar each outside India.**

Order from Department of Organized Research

LEONARD THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

JABALPUR, M.P., INDIA

OTHER BOOKS

R. D. IMMANUEL, Marcellus, (*The message of St. Paul in the form of a Drama*).

Price 50 nP.

PRINTED IN INDIA BY K. A. KORULA AT THE WESLEY PRESS, MYSORE CITY
FOR DR. R. D. IMMANUEL, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER